

Miss you all!

Dear Mom & Dad

On Board ship
July 3, 1942

We are on our way at last - must
sudden, but not unexpected - we
left Tuesday morning ^{June 30th} train to the
perry and thence to our ship in N.Y.

It was terribly hot and we were
laden with gas masks belts with canteens,
overcoats, musette bags on our backs
and suitcases and pocket books. Such
excitement and I won't deny that
I felt a quiver of fear too.
It took a long time to embark
long rows of military men as
laden as ourselves. We also had our
helmets on - easiest way to carry them
but heavy and hot. We are aboard
an Australian ship - the crew of course
from Down Under. There are just 14
of us nurses on board and about
3,400 soldiers. We sit on the deck
most of the time reading and talking.

Lovely lads - Kusalla and I became
acquainted with two Australian engineers
nice young men - they live in Tonitla
New South Wales. They told us a lot about
their country - We have seen porpoises
^{bring} us fruit in every
morning - it is really cold at night
and so foggy. One of our poor nurses
Margaret is deathly sea sick and so
miserable. We got a basket of fruit ^{4th} night.

We had a scare on our 4th night
at sea. Miss Wallace our chief nurse
came in our stateroom and frightened
us half to death - she told us 2
submarines had been following us.
We were told to dress warmly in
vest shirts, slacks sweaters, ^{over coat} overcoat
pockets with chocolate bars and
small necessities. That was the way we
slept, if we slept. Remmi dug out her
hikie and read some passages - we were
too ^{keyed up} keyed up and nervous to sleep, but we
must have because we were awakened by our steward
and we were still here!

Seven of us to a cabin. It is very crowded but we get up in relays and dress and use the tiny bathroom.

There were seven ships in the convoy with destroyers as escort. It is the largest detachment - thousands of American soldiers in this convoy. The weather was unpleasant dull, drizzly grey skies overhead - the fog did lift occasionally but only to give us a quick glimpse of the sun.

In a deep fog our ship and one other strayed from the convoy and we ended up in ^{Hali}Halifax ^{Harbor}Harbor for 2 days. Two destroyers found us and escorted us the rest of the way. - We understood U-boats ^{had gone}were lurking nearby as the Axis hydrophones evidently know of the troop movement. Depth bombs were dropped several times as we continually zigzagged across the dangerous ^{RUN ways}runways of U-boats. ^{R.A.F. Pilot}R.A.F. pilot officers

There are many young R.A.F. ^{Pilot}pilot officers aboard. have seen studying in American - only 19 & 20. - have already seen in combat.

It is so cold and dark in our ~~shelter~~ room
blackout curtains at the portholes we ~~still~~
haven't lost our sense of humor, however!

The English lads were admonished by
their parents about returning home with
"that damn Yankee accent!" We laughed
about that.

July 7 The watch almost shot up our own
destroyer this a.m. It just ~~looked~~ ^{loomed} up out
of the fog and they were really ~~scared~~ ^{shocked}.
Everyone is nervous and on edge - this is
the danger zone. Was an emergency
drill this a.m. There was much shooting
along with it and we ^{surely} ~~surely~~ ^{Mc Coy} thought
this was the real Mc Coy. We are
close to Iceland - in fact we can
see it in the distance. No wonder
it is so cold. I hope we never have
to jump in this ice water or we
will never return home. It is light all
right!

July 13, 1942
The coffee is horrible so we are
becoming tea drinkers - we or rather I

rather feel so far away from home &
- the ocean is so dark and deep
and all we can hear are the waves
pounding against the ship - night and
day. We have had concerts and dances
in the evening. Rumor was that we
went 200 miles off course to avoid
some U-boats. We also arose at 4 am to
see a gorgeous sunrise.

July 12
Beautiful day - the coast of Scotland
is in sight - to-night we are in the
harbor safe and sound. Our perilous
voyage is over!

July 13th
We sailed up the broad river
Clyde to-day - blimps and planes soared
overhead - many ships lined the
river banks. It is a great ship-
building area and we saw many
scottish "Rasie the Riveticks in their
overalls working around and climbing
all over the ships. People lined the

banks and waved and cheered.

(3)

We said a sad goodbye to our friends and fellow passengers. We were the last off so we watched the rest of them leave - it was sad but I expect it is only among the first of many good byes. Jack - my Australian friend is going to send you a cable to say we arrived safely.

Thus, after days of waiting at Tel Aviv - our long 15 day voyage through submarine infested seas we are finally here. I shall now be able to post this letter. Don't worry about me Mom. It was kind of hairy at times but we made it. I shall send my address as soon as possible.

Give my love to all.

Your loving daughter

Mary. xxxxxx